

BRITISH COLUMBIA LAW AND CALIFORNIA LAW.

Judge Begbie seems determined to nip pot-house murders in the bud. Two men, Neil and Hannell, got into a dispute at "the liquor bar". Hannell pulled a pistol from the side of a comrade and fired at Neil, who then advanced and fired three shots, killing his antagonist. In California this would be considered all right, praiseworthy, and fair. Indeed, as a general thing here the abettors in the murder -- who were present by appointment to see it done -- are got to swear that the murdered man had "made a movement of his arm as if about to draw his Colt," which is justification enough, even though the dead man is found to have nothing on his person but "two bits and a toothpick." In British Columbia they look on these little "difficulties" in another light. Judge Begbie explained to the jury the different degrees of homicide as distinguished by the law, and laid down distinctly that every case of homicide not being in execution of the commands of lawful authority, purely accidental, or in the last desperate extremity of self-defence -- after every means of retreat and escape had been cut off -- must be felonious and manslaughter, and that in every instance homicide would be presumed to be wilful murder unless some lawful excuse or mitigation were proved by the killer, or clearly appeared in the whole circumstances of the case. Neil was sentenced to four years' penal servitude. We know not whether the fault be in our laws or in the way they are executed, but no such murders are punished here -- even though the murderer be a foreigner. Since writing the above a shooting affair has taken place at San Jose. A man charged with murder was being placed on trial; his dear friends and the dear friends of the deceased met and fired twelve shots; two men were killed on the spot -- one a poor gentleman sitting in the court room with his heelscocked upon a table. No arrests were made. - San Francisco News Letter.

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(Extract from "The Law Times" (London) Vol 3, pp. 105 and 106,